

## LITERATURE CITED

- BRANNON, H. R., JR., A. C. DAUGHTRY, D. PERRY, L. H. SIMMONS, W. W. WHITAKER, & MILTON WILLIAMS: "Humble Oil Company Radiocarbon Dates, I" (*Science*, 125, 1957, 147-50).
- BUCHANAN, G. D.: "The current range of the armadillo, *Dasybus novemcinctus mexicanus*, in the United States" (*Texas Jour. Sci.*, 10, 1958, 349-51).
- CROOK, W. W., JR. & R. K. HARRIS: "A Pleistocene campsite near Lewisville, Texas" (*American Antiquity*, 23, 1958, 233-46).
- HOLMES, WALTER W. & GEORGE G. SIMPSON: "Pleistocene exploration and fossil Edentates in Florida (*Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.*, 59, 1931, 338-418).
- SIMPSON, GEORGE G.: "Pleistocene mammalian fauna of the Seminole Field, Pinellas County, Florida" (*ibid.*, 56, 1929, 561-99).

## Note

OBSERVATIONS OF CAPTIVE HOG-NOSED SNAKES, *HETERODON PLATYRHINOS* *PLATYRHINOS* LATREILLE.—Much has been written about the gentleness of the hog-nosed snake and of its ability to flatten its head and hiss loudly and of its ability to "feign death". I thought it appropriate to record here observations of certain other habits of *Heterodon platyrhinos platyrhinos*. These observations were made of three individuals kept in captivity for periods of 13 months, 4 months, and 1 month. All three were collected in the southwest corner of Dallas County, an area characterized by limestone outcrops, "cedar brakes", and little water.

Due, perhaps, to the burrowing habits of this species, two of the three snakes were quite restless in their cages until some sort of cover material (pieces of bark or newspaper) under which they could crawl was provided. The third snake simply placed its head under its body and seemed to consider itself hidden or buried. All three remained quiet during the day but became quite active at night.

These snakes have eaten readily both during the day and at night throughout their periods of captivity. Of the several types of food offered (toads, frogs, mice, insects) toads are definitely preferred; the mice and insects were ignored completely. Each snake has devoured, readily, an average of two toads (*Bufo woodhousei* Girard) a week. During the winter months the one snake under observation went for periods of 6 to 8 weeks without food. In most instances the bodies of the toads were two to three times, in diameter, the bodies of the snakes.

In feeding the snakes approached the toads cautiously and slowly. There was, generally, no "strike". The snakes simply opened their mouths and grasped the toads firmly by the heads. In one or two instances a snake became excited and pursued a toad rapidly around the cage, grasping it by whatever part of the body it could. Even in these instances, however, the snake worked its mouth up to the head of the toad so that the head was swallowed first. In one instance a toad was swallowed sideways. On this occasion the pressure on the body of the toad was great enough to force one of its lungs out through its mouth.

Although the toads struggled vigorously, the snakes usually managed to swallow them without difficulty. The swallowing process in the case of a large toad lasted approximately 15 minutes. The snakes would push the toads against a coil of the body or against the side of the cage to help force the toad down the throat.

These snakes seemed to need little water and were actually seen to drink water only twice.

Ingestion of a meal seemed to cause defecation within a 48 hour period. The wastes passed at this time were undoubtedly the residues of food eaten prior to the last meal since digestion seemed to take place slowly. A "lump" in the body could be plainly seen for as long as 72 hours after ingestion.

In the act of defecation, the tail was held at a 45 degree angle above the floor of the cage. As the feces were passed from the vent, the snake crawled away from them.

The wastes were of a semiliquid consistency, and evaporation reduced them to a powder. There was little odor associated with the feces.

The snake that has been in captivity for 13 months is now approximately 30 inches in length. Although it was not measured accurately at the time of capture, it was approximately 25 inches long. Thus, there was an increase in length of about 5 inches during the 13-months period. During this period, this snake has twice shed its skin.  
—William B. Stallcup.

## Men of Science in Texas, 1820-1880: III

S. W. Geiser

(Continued from page 48)

HUFF, William P[?itt] (1811-86) In ?August, 1837, William P. Huff, a merchant living at San Felipe de Austin on the Brazos, found in the banks of the river, near the shoals a few miles below the town, a collection of bones of Pleistocene mammals (Houston *Telegraph & Texas Register*, Sept. 9, 1837, p. 2). Later (before 1839) he collected more of the same sort of material in the banks of the Colorado River. Two years later he proposed to open a museum at San Felipe, with the above among the exhibits (Houston *Morning Star*, Sept. 18, 1839, p. 2). Dr. Frédéric LeClerc (*q.v.*) saw these fossils in the summer of 1838. Bollaert (*q.v.*) was disappointed in not seeing the collection, when he visited San Felipe in 1842. Bollaert said, in part, "...The vertebrae and leg bone [are] said to be very large. ... I subsequently obtained a specimen of the teeth, and was assured that large quantities of such teeth and bones had been discovered, as well as a fossil horn [?tusk] 8 feet in length, and three feet in circumference at the thickest part. The fossil tooth that came into my possession appears to be of the *Mastodon*." (Bollaert, *Jour. Roy. Geogr. Soc.*, 20, 1851, 115). Dr. W. M. Carpenter (1846, *post*) says that they were on exhibition at Mr. G. Cook's gallery of paintings, at 13 St. Charles Street, New Orleans. He says, further, "Mr. Huff has been a resident of Texas since his boyhood, and has in that wild region of the western part of that state acquired an ardent passion for the collection and study of fossils." (W. M. Carpenter, "Remarks on some fossil bones..." (*Amer. Jour. Sci.* (II), 1, 1846, 244). The collection included remains of a Pleistocene elephant, *Megatherium*, tapir, mastodon, and wide-horned bison, *Bison latifrons* (*Southwest Review*, 16, 1930, 132). ... Mr. Huff was probably born in Woodville, Miss. He was the foreman of the first grand jury after the organization of Austin County, Texas, in 1837; and about 1842 was district clerk of the county. After the Civil War he held the same position in Fort Bend County. He died in Houston, 25 November, 1886. *Biography*: S. W. Geiser, *Field & Laboratory*, 13, 1945, 53-60, *portr.*

HUGHES, Captain George Wurtz, U.S.A. (1806-70) Topographic engineer, geologist. In August to December, 1846, Hughes (accompanied by Lieuts. L. Sitgreaves, F. T. Bryan, and W. B. Franklin, *qq.vv.*) went as Chief Engineer of the staff of Gen. J. E. Wool,